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BOY-SMOKERS.

A LEARNED Professor of Medicine in one of our universities some time ago made the remark to us that those students who passed through his hands rarely succeeded in distinguishing themselves if they were habitual smokers of tobacco. The smoking of cigars or pipes seemed to dull their faculties, and to have the effect of preventing them from sedulously gathering facts sufficient to excel at examinations for degrees. We repeat the remark as we heard it, and submit it for consideration. Perhaps other professors equally candid and observant might have a similar tale to tell.

As is pretty generally known, the smoking of tobacco has a certain intoxicating effect. It soothes the nervous system, and in cases of poor living it lulls the craving of a hungry stomach without in any degree feeding the animal system. Men who happen to be inclosed in a coal-mine, and are perishing for lack of food, are stated to have protracted life by a few consoling whiffs of tobacco. In cases of this nature, smoking may be allowable as a positive necessity; but we cannot perceive the slightest reason for this indulgence in ordinary circumstances. As usually observed, smoking is a vice, like dram-drinking. It is taken up in a spirit of idleness, without a vestige of excuse. We need say little of its wastefulness of means, though that must be very considerable. The government duties alone exigible on the tobacco used in the United Kingdom amount to about nine millions annually; and if we add the cost of the article, the yearly tobacco bill to smokers probably reaches the sum-total of twenty millions. We have heard of instances of youths in fashionable life who yearly smoke fifty pounds' worth of cigars, and doubtless there are many whose outlay must be far greater. Among the less affluent classes, the habitual expenditure on tobacco cannot but encroach on available means of living, and often when the outlay can be ill spared. Viewed as a narcotic, tobacco may be presumed to be of some value medically, though we have never heard what are its actual merits

in the pharmacopœia. What we specially draw attention to are its mischievous effects on the youths growing into manhood. It tends to a weakening of the intellectual system, which to all who have to make their way in the world ought to be exposed to no such blighting influence.

It is scarcely necessary to point out the fact that tobacco-smoking pollutes the breath, damages the teeth, and weakens the digestive organs. In not a single feature, as a common indulgence, is it commendable, but very much the reverse. It disposes to inactivity and carelessness. Few habitual smokers attain to eminence in business. Farmers given to smoking are usually the latest in getting in their crops. As publicly exhibited, the practice is odious. Smoking in the streets has become a downright nuisance, for passengers are compelled to inhale the fumes, whether of cigars or pipes, disgorged by smokers. In steam-vessels the nuisance has risen to something absolutely intolerable. We believe it is often the cause of destructive fires in dwellings, warehouses, farm-yards, and ships. In our voyage to America in a steam-vessel some years since, we were not a little surprised and horrified to observe the reckless indifference with which certain passengers threw down the still-burning ends of cigars and matches on the deck—a practice which strangely enough did not seem to incur the reprobation of the officers on duty.

Within our recollection, few but those of middle or old age smoked. The practice has now been imitated by the young. Boys of ten years old are seen with pipes in their mouths, and lads at the different colleges think it manly to have smoking-parties. It appears to us that writers on matters of public health have been singularly remiss in not denouncing the mischievous effects of smoking on youth. We hear plentifully of the ruinous effects of liquid intoxicants, but little of the injury committed on the youthful body or mind by drugging with tobacco. The German authorities, as we learn by a correspondence in *The Times*, have at length become alive to the pestilent evil. They would probably not have troubled themselves on

the subject, but for a political reason. In Germany, all males from their birth are enrolled to be soldiers, and the discovery is made that the youths who are about to take their turn in the ranks have been weakened by smoking. 'The State,' as is observed, 'must have a nation of soldiers. Smoking is believed to be ruinous to the constitution of the young. It weakens the powers of the stomach at that important crisis of our development when the largest quantities of food have to be assimilated to build up the growing frame. It lowers the vitality of the body, and affects the action of the heart. Muscle, energy, endurance, indeed all that makes the man and the soldier, are thus at stake. The youthful nature is more susceptible of such injurious influences, and the young may be said to make or unmake themselves by their own habits. The German physicians appear to have arrived at the conclusion, no doubt on the proof of facts, that a young tobacco-smoker unmakes and in a manner destroys himself, and incapacitates himself for the defence of his country.' As a result, the police in certain towns have had orders to forbid all lads under sixteen years of age to smoke in the streets, and to punish the offence by fine or imprisonment. As the Germans might be called a nation of smokers, with a correspondent amount of dreaminess in their constitution, we await with some interest to hear the outcome of this new and judicious course of policy.

In reference to the foregoing observations on the discouragement of tobacco-smoking in Germany, a correspondent gives his own experience. 'I may mention,' he says, 'that while travelling last month on a Danish steamer, I had much conversation on various subjects with a Belgian medical man, who informed me that he was then engaged, at the request of the Belgian government, on a journey of observation and inquiry as to the causes of colour-blindness, an ocular affection which, he said, is occasioning increasing anxiety, not merely in his own country, but especially in Germany, from its influence upon railway and other accidents, and also, to some extent, upon military inefficiency. I asked the question—"What, so far as your investigations have proceeded, appears to be the main cause of this colour-blindness?" He replied: "The too general and excessive use of tobacco."'

We have only touched on this important subject. The odious practice of tobacco-smoking by the young concerns the national welfare, and is worthy of very general consideration. Every one in his sphere is called on as a matter of moral obligation to do what lies in his power to discountenance and abate a practice so needless and reprehensible.

W. C.

THE HAMILTONS.

CHAPTER VIII.—WILD-DUCK ISLAND.

BERTIE's little sister was born in March; and although Mrs Maloney had taken up her abode at Hamilton for some weeks, for nearly a fortnight Jack saw very little of Phyllis, whose time was fully occupied in nursing her sister and attending to the wants of the whole household. It was therefore with feelings of unmingled satisfaction that he found her, one April afternoon, sitting quietly in the veranda in Robert's easy-chair, her

hands folded in her lap, her eyes gazing dreamily at the water, and a look of leisure about her that was unusual.

'I am so glad to see you unoccupied, Phyllis,' he said as he came up to her. 'It seems such a long time since we had a quiet chat.'

'Well, for the next hour I have really nothing to do,' she replied, smiling. 'Bessie is on the parlour sofa; and she sent me out here with strict injunctions to rest.'

'Could you rest as well in the boat, if I were to row?' asked Jack.

'Quite as well; better, I think. Where are you going?'

'Oh, I just thought of cruising about for a little,' he answered, 'and shooting some birds for Bessie. She likes wild-duck; does she not?'

'If you will shoot a few, I will answer for her liking them,' returned Phyllis, who tripped away for her bonnet; while Jack went into the parlour to welcome Bessie back to it, and to have a peep at the little unconscious atom of humanity nestling in her breast.

'And to think that this will be a woman some day,' he said laughingly; 'with all a woman's capacity for good or evil, with power to make the happiness or misery of some man's life!'

'The happiness, I hope,' said Bessie, looking up with a soft mist of gladness in her blue eyes.

'I am sure of that if she takes after her mother—and aunt. I am going to take Phyllis out on the lake for an hour; can you spare her?'

'I shall be very glad, Jack. She wants a rest; for the last few weeks she has worked really too hard. Do you know I have nearly persuaded Judy Maloney to shut up her own house and come to live here altogether?'

'A very good idea.'

'Yes, Phyllis would have more time then to devote to reading and boating and riding and all the things she likes. Though she is so ungrudging in her devotion to me, I know she misses all that.'

'She has the most charmingly unselfish temper I ever met with in my life,' exclaimed Jack, with such earnestness that the colour mounted to his brow.

'I am glad he has found that out,' mused Bessie, as she looked out at the window and saw the two tall handsome figures wend slowly down towards the water together. 'Sometimes I fancy that he does not thoroughly appreciate Phyllis. She is such a curious mixture—now of sweetness, now of determination. But oh!' she wound up with a feminine instinct, 'I wish she wouldn't wear those horrid sun-bonnets!'

It was an exquisite day, one of those days of early autumn when our Australian climate is absolutely perfect. The first showers of rain had fallen a day or two before, and the islands were clothed with a flush of emerald green. Overhead was a blue sky, in which white fleecy clouds sailed slowly; a soft delicious breeze was wafted from the south, and the air seemed full of wild sweet odours. Jack had laid his gun in the bottom of the boat, and had taken the oars, while Phyllis presided at the rudder. The plash of the oars and the musical rustle of the reeds had for her an undefined, exquisite charm.

'How delightful to be out again,' she said, drawing a long breath. 'Everything looks so green and fresh now.'

'I should like to be allowed to judge better of your gladness,' remarked Jack with great gravity.

'How? In what way?' she asked, perplexed.

'Well, I suppose you are glad; but as you persist in wearing bonnets that completely hide your face, I can only judge your sentiments by your voice.'

Phyllis laughed a low satisfied laugh. She was not in the least sorry that the rosy flush which suffused her fair face was hidden from those bright black eyes of her companion.

'Where are we going?' she asked.

'What do you call that low purple island lying out there?' returned Jack.

'Oh, we call that Wild-duck Island; there are always so many birds there.'

'Well, that will suit nicely,' he said, turning the boat in that direction. 'We want birds; and I have been haunted for some time by a desire to visit that island.'

'Do you think we shall be back in time for tea?' asked Phyllis. 'It is a good way off.'

'I daresay we shall be pardoned if we are not,' he answered gaily. 'It isn't often you and I set off on an expedition together, Phyllis.'

Chattering and laughing like two children out for a holiday, Jack's strong arms made the boat cut rapidly through the water. The drops that fell from his oars flashed like diamonds in the sunlight; far away the hills stood out softly blue against the sky. Everything seemed fresh and young and beautiful, like themselves. It was one of those rare and precious hours when young souls forget everything for a time except their own happiness. For though those two had as yet never breathed a word of love, they were beginning to be shyly conscious that they were more to one another than aught in the world besides.

Gradually the island, which had looked purple in the distance, began to assume a green flush of colour as they drew near it. It was a long low island, rising slightly in the centre, and sloping on all sides gently towards the water. Here and there along the edges grew the dark sharp-leaved tea-tree, and everywhere tall reeds bent and rustled in the shallower water. Its sole inhabitants were a few sheep, belonging to Robert, which led a free and happy existence on their small lonely home. One of them had two snow-white lambs by her side, and the pretty creatures, tame from their very isolation, stood quite still, staring in surprise at the intruders on their domain. Phyllis thought they would allow her to stroke them; but when she was almost within reach, they sprang off to a little distance and stood staring once more. Jack remarked that the island certainly deserved its name, for hundreds of wild-ducks rose from the rushes on every side only to settle down again on the water.

Seated on a grassy knoll that overlooked the lake and commanded a prospect of their own island, the two adventurers became wrapped in the beauty of the scene.

'This is quite the prettiest view of Hamilton I have yet seen, Phyll. I should like to have this scene photographed, to send home to some of my old friends.'

'I wish I could sketch,' interposed Phyllis regretfully. 'The sight of those lovely tints and lines always awakens in me a strong desire to be able to reproduce them. But I have never had a chance of learning.'

'I think I know enough of the rudiments of drawing to be able to teach you,' returned her companion, smiling. 'I have no gift in that way; but perhaps you may have the genius that I lack, and be able to put my theories into practice.'

'O how delightful that would be!' exclaimed Phyllis with sparkling eyes. 'But tell me, would it not be giving you a great deal of trouble?'

'I think not,' said Jack. 'You will not be a stupid pupil, I know. It will be a pleasant employment for those winter evenings that are coming on. I believe I have a colour-box and pencils somewhere amongst my belongings.'

He could hardly have proposed anything more charming to Phyllis. The girl had a positive thirst for knowledge of all sorts, which owing to circumstances, the loneliness of her home, and its distance from any town where she could procure masters, she found it difficult to satisfy.

She was meditating on the charming suggestion, when Jack, who had strolled to a little distance, came back to her, holding in his hand a curious round black ball. 'I have found a curiosity,' he said, holding it out for her to look at. 'The skull of something. What is it?'

'Oh, don't you know? Why, that is a black-fellow's skull. There are numbers of them on this island. We think the place must have been used as a burying-ground by the natives at one time; but it must have been long ago.'

'How very strange!' said Jack, turning over the curious relic of mortality he held in his hands and examining it attentively. 'How small it is, and how curiously shaped—almost like the skull of a baboon.'

'It is very much weather-worn,' said Phyllis.

'I suppose they have quite given up using this place now?' he asked.

'Yes; quite. In fact no natives have been seen in this neighbourhood for a long time. I am glad of it, for I confess to a shrinking from them which I cannot conquer, though I feel it to be wrong. After all, they are human creatures—like ourselves.'

'Doubtful!' mused Jack, smiling, as he mentally contrasted the glorious creature beside him, with her fair skin and deep-blue eyes, and golden-brown hair, with the few wretched blacks he had seen on the outskirts of some of the townships during his journey from the coast. 'No,' he went on aloud, at the conclusion of his meditations; 'I very much doubt if they can be called human creatures—like ourselves. But as that is a question it would take us some hours to discuss, and as the sun is just about to set, we shall postpone it in the meantime. Will you stay here for a little, while I go and have a shot at the ducks?' Smiling a glad assent, her companion rose from the grass, where he had thrown himself nearly at her feet. 'Take care of my black-fellow's skull!' said he.

'Why, what use is the ugly thing?' she asked, laughing.

'I am going to take it home and stick it up in my room, that I may look at it occasionally and meditate on the shortness of life. Meanwhile

you may amuse yourself by hunting for a couple of nice cross-bones to stick under it, if you like.'

Phyllis watched him march slowly down to the water's edge and step into the boat, which he had moored to a convenient tree-stump, and then she saw him pull out among the reeds, where he waited quietly for a shot. Half laughing to herself at his whimsical request, she rose and strolled away up to the highest point of the island, searching from side to side as she went for suitable materials of which to form the 'cross-bones' he had spoken of. It was rather a curious occupation for that bright young girl on that lovely evening, with the golden waters quivering all about her, the green grass under her feet, a young crescent moon shewing faintly in the sky overhead; but the contrast hardly struck her at the time. They were so old, those relics of humanity, it was almost like searching for the fossil remains of an extinct race. Had they indeed been *men*, whose bones lay here? Had those small curiously shaped skulls contained brains of the same quality as those which could grasp the wonders of science, plan cathedrals and bridges, and conquer Nature by utilising her mightiest forces? Or had they been but a half-developed race of beings, half human, half animal, who had man's instinct to hunt and fish, and the wilder animals' instinct to roam homeless over the vast and desolate territories of the land, then undiscovered by any civilised nation?

Thus musing, the girl had ascended to the very crown of the island, and was descending the slope on the opposite side to which Jack and she had been sitting, when all at once she caught sight of something which banished everything from her mind for the time, except a sudden feeling of surprise mingled with something like fear. Just at the foot of the slope where she was standing, and almost concealed by a dark thick clump of tea-trees, was a square space bare of grass, surrounded by a rude fence of cut boughs. She knew at once what it was, for though she had never seen anything like it before, she had heard Robert describe a similar inclosure. It was a black-fellow's grave. Not of the same date by any means as those old-world remains about which Jack and she had been speculating: this inclosure, though rude, was evidently but a few months old; and when, after a long pause, she persuaded herself to go closer to it, she saw traces which led her to believe that it might be more recent still; for inside the rough fence there were stains, which Phyllis knew, as she glanced at them with a strange sickening feeling, could have only one origin. What the peculiar ceremonies of the blacks were, she did not know; but she had heard dark hints from Judy Maloney and some of the other women on the island, which spoke horrors.

When had this lonely grave been made? she asked herself, as she gazed at it, her face a good deal paler than it had been a little while ago. What whim or observance had led them to bring their dead here to this old burying-ground, which had seemingly been unused for centuries? Was this the grave of some dead chief among them, and had they brought him here in obedience to some of the weird traditions of their race? However it was, they had come quietly, for no canoes had been observed in that part of the lake,

and no blacks had been seen in the neighbourhood for a long time. Once, when the place was first colonised, a wild tribe had haunted their old hunting-grounds for a time; but they had long since gone far into the interior; or perhaps some of them had strayed into the neighbourhood of the towns and become demoralised, as the blacks so quickly do. At anyrate, they were gone as a people, and the white man cultivated the ground once held by the aborigines.

Welcome now was Jack's loud clear 'cooie' which hailed from the other side of the island. The loneliness and silence of the place were becoming oppressive to the girl, and yet it exercised a weird sort of fascination which had made her linger.

Her answering 'cooie' came faintly to his ear as he sat in the boat waiting for her, and presently he saw her appear over the crown of the hill and hasten down the slope towards him. The evening air had brought the colour back to her cheeks before she reached the boat; but for some time after she was seated, and they were rowing homewards, Jack noticed that his fair companion was unusually silent, as if preoccupied with some absorbing thought.

'The skull!' she exclaimed suddenly; 'I have forgotten it.'

'Never mind, Phyll. We can go back for it some day,' he answered. But I do not think they ever did.

CHAPTER IX.—THE DEADLY TOY.

I do not know why it was that Phyllis did not tell what she had seen, either to Jack or Robert, till long afterwards, when it was too late to be of use. Perhaps it was that she convinced herself that as the blacks had come and gone so silently, without shewing themselves to any of the white people near, they could mean no mischief, and therefore another visit was not to be apprehended. But the more likely explanation of her silence is, that the sight of the lonely grave, the perfect silence and solitude of the place, had touched her nerves painfully, and that she shrank from speaking of it to any one. At anyrate, she never did speak till long afterwards.

But a few days after their visit to Wild-duck Island, something happened which troubled and perplexed James Hamilton in an uncomfortable manner. He had gone out with Robert immediately after breakfast, and remembering during the forenoon that he had left something which he required in his own room, he went back to the house to get it. He had always known that Phyllis attended to the keeping of his room in order; but not generally being at home at the time when she did so, he had never found her there until to-day, when entering suddenly, he saw her standing by his toilet-table, holding something in her hand which she was regarding attentively. It was a little revolver, not more than six inches long, but so beautifully made, that though capable of accounting for six men's lives, it was light enough to be used by a woman or even a child. The deadly toy had lain half-forgotten at the bottom of Jack's portmanteau till the evening before, when, while looking for the colour-box he had spoken of to Phyllis, he had taken it out and cleaned it.

'Phyllis! what are you doing with that?' he said rather sharply, for he disliked seeing such a thing in her hands.

'I was thinking,' she replied, slowly, and looking up at him without a shade of embarrassment on her face, 'how easily I could fire this.'

'What an idea!' he said smiling, as he gently took the weapon from the girl's hand. 'Women have no business with such things. It was careless of me to leave it lying there, though.'

'I wish you would shew me how it works,' she said without noticing either his smile or the half-petulance which accompanied it.

'Why, what would be the use of your knowing that?'

'I should like to know. Do shew me,' she urged.

And with a sort of impatience, he explained to her how the revolving principle acted. 'Will that do now, Miss Curiosity?' he asked. 'Or is there anything else you would like?'

'Yes; I should like you to give me this.'

'What an odd taste you have, Phyllis! Do you mean that you want the pistol for your own, to keep?'

'Yes; I want the pistol for my own, to keep,' she answered unblushingly.

'There are other things I would rather give you for my first present,' he said, looking at her attentively. 'For instance, the colour-box I shewed you last night.'

'I didn't mean to ask for a present. And I suppose this is worth a good deal of money. But if you will lend it to me that will do quite as well.'

'Phyllis!' he exclaimed, flushing with vexation, 'you use your powers of persuasion mercilessly, for you know I cannot refuse you this or anything else I have? There; take it; but I would rather give you anything else.'

'And I would rather have this,' she persisted, smiling, and accepting it from his hand.

He went to his portmanteau and drew out a mahogany case. 'You will find everything belonging to it there,' he said, 'but I entreat you to be cautious how you play with the deadly toy; and without another word he left the room.'

Phyllis stood looking after him in silence for more than a minute, and there was a suspicion of moisture in her dark-blue eyes, and of a quiver in the lines of her beautiful lips. Then she went quietly to her own room and put her new acquisition out of sight, but not till she had examined it thoroughly once more, and satisfied herself that she understood its way of working.

CHAPTER X.—THE BLACKS.

The month of May came in with such heavy rains that Jack began to understand how it was that a country could be fertile and yet rainless for more than half the year. 'At home in Scotland,' he said, accosting his brother, 'the rain keeps coming down in a fashion all the year through. Here we have it all at once; that is the difference. I think I almost prefer this way, though it is very unpatriotic to say so.'

'Not at all,' Robert answered. 'Keep your patriotism for your new country, and think that everything Australian is best!'

There was comparatively little farm-work to be done at this season, though it seemed quite enough

to keep every one busy. And Robert took it into his head that a new jetty was required at a certain spot at the other end of the island, and that after the first heavy rains were past and a few days of bright weather had set in, was a capital time to build it. For a day or two Jack and he were busily employed in trimming posts and planks into shape; then one morning the materials were all hoisted into a great dray which Robert drove, while Jack rode beside the team on his own gray horse. It was very early in the morning, scarcely daylight, when they set out; their dinner was packed up and stowed away in the dray, for they did not intend to be home till late in the evening.

Phyllis the ever useful, stood at the door to speed their departure; and as they waved their temporary adieus, she could not but own to just a soupçon of loneliness as she turned into the house again. Judy Maloney had left the farm for her own cottage only two days before. She was to return and to stay permanently as a household help, in the course of a week or two; but prior to doing so, it was necessary that she should arrange the affairs of her own small domicile, and make ready all her belongings for transfer to the comfortable rooms which Mr Hamilton had prepared for her and her husband just behind his own house. So, as things happened, Phyllis was quite alone in the house with Bessie and the two children. The morning passed quickly; Bessie was dressed, and Phyllis helped to dress the two little ones, and then went to prepare breakfast for them. Then there were all the innumerable things to be done necessary for the comfort of a household; bread to bake, meat to prepare for cooking, sweeping and dusting, and cleaning of dishes; and by the time those things were all accomplished the sun was high in the heavens, and it was almost time to think about dinner.

Phyllis went into the parlour to see how Bessie and the children were getting on, and to rest for a few minutes. All three looked very happy and comfortable; the little lady was sound asleep in her pretty bassinet; and Bertie was absorbed in a box of bricks, which his father had brought him after his last visit to the new store at Glen Assynt, and which had been a constant source of delight to the little boy ever since. Bessie was quietly sewing, preparing some of the warm garments necessary for her household during the coming winter. Her clever fingers made nearly everything that was worn at Hamilton Farm, though she was not strong enough to overtake much of the housework.

'Are you tired, dear?' asked Phyllis, coming to her sister's side and stooping down to kiss her. There was something in the girl's love for her delicate and gentle sister that was perhaps more like the love of a strong and gentle man for a woman, than the love of one woman for another. She always thought of Bessie as of one who was to be guarded from fatigue or danger of any kind, who was to be kept from anxiety if possible, and shielded from harm. Indeed had Bessie not been what she was—the most loving and unselfish of women—Robert and Phyllis might have spoilt her just a little between them. But as it was, her every thought and wish was for the happiness of those who loved her, and whom she loved so

heartily in return; and her beautiful and gentle nature bloomed like a rare and exquisite flower in the atmosphere of tenderness by which she was surrounded.

'Have the children been good?' Phyllis asked, as she touched Bessie's soft hair caressingly. 'I meant to have come in earlier, and to have helped you with them, but I found so much to do in the kitchen.'

'They have been as good as gold,' answered Bessie brightly. 'Bertie grows quite a companion with his little talk.'

'Bless him! He is auntie's own boy!' said Phyllis, taking the little fellow from his play, and tossing him up and down in her strong arms, making him laugh and shout with delight. Still holding the child in her arms, she opened the front-door and went out into the veranda. The air felt sweet after the rain, with that newly washed freshness which is so delicious. The islands lay like great emeralds in the water, so covered were they by their new mantle of living green; the sun shone brightly down on the lake, and everywhere there seemed a flutter and movement, as if old Earth felt the sap stirring in her veins, and kept whispering to herself: 'Spring is coming! I know it! I feel it!'

But Phyllis had not stood in the veranda for five minutes, before, in the middle of all this beauty and freshness, she descried a dark object, which made her heart seem to stand still for a minute. From behind a promontory on the opposite side of the water, to the right of the spot where she stood, and not more than a quarter of a mile off, she saw a boat suddenly shoot out, and her quick eyes discerned in an instant that its shape was not in the least like that of any boat belonging to Robert or to any one else in the neighbourhood. It was much longer and narrower; and was filled with at least a dozen human beings, whose bodies looked dark against the sunlit water. Phyllis watched them for a minute or two in perfect silence; it seemed as if she scarcely breathed, so still was she; then she carried Bertie into the parlour again, and set him down beside his bricks, and stepping out into the veranda once more, she closed the door behind her. Going quietly past the parlour window, she hummed a little air softly, so that Bessie might think all was well.

'And probably nothing will come of it,' she said to herself. 'I daresay I am silly to be so frightened. Only I wish they had not come to-day, just when we happen to be alone here. And it is such a long time since any have been seen about here.'

Even while admitting to herself that she was afraid, she walked on bravely towards the spot where, from the direction the canoe was taking, she saw the blacks intended to land. She felt relieved that they were evidently not coming to the jetty just in front of the house, but to a spot nearly a hundred yards off. If she could only keep them out of Bessie's sight and hearing, she thought, till Robert and Jack came back at night, all would be well. Or perhaps some of the men might come up to the farm during the day. She looked in all directions to see if any one was in sight; but no human beings were visible except the dark freight coming so swiftly towards the shore. Even Sam the farm-lad had disappeared,

and Phyllis thought with a pang that he had probably stolen off to join his master. Else how quickly would she have sent him off, running at the top of his speed, to fetch that master home!

By the time she reached the bank which overlooked the spot for which the boat had been making, the boat had reached the shore, and the blacks were landing, about a dozen of them, men and women. There they were, most of them, as the weather was not hot, wrapped in opossum skins or blankets; by which last, Phyllis surmised that they had visited some township, and thought with a sickening feeling of dread that they were probably none the better for that. Standing on the top of the bank, she quietly watched their proceedings with as much calmness as she could command. In return they stared at her, the one white girl confronting them all, and then conferred with each other for several minutes. Then a tall fellow with a bearded face, and eyes that rolled fiercely under their bushy eyebrows, approached as spokesman. And this was his speech, short but pointed: 'You white missy! Give sheep! Give rum!'

In a moment Phyllis's plan of action was formed. She spoke slowly and distinctly, holding her head very high and pointing imperiously with her hand. 'You are to stay here, all of you. If you come nearer the house, the master will be angry. One man and one woman'—she held up her fingers to illustrate—'may come with me, and I will give them sheep for all, and plenty plenty rum.'

The black-fellow grinned, shewing his great white fangs; he evidently understood perfectly what she meant, for he nodded good-humouredly enough; whereupon Phyllis turned and walked towards the house, but took care to make a detour which would take her and her unwelcome companions in by the back-way. Then followed her, after a moment's hesitation, a man and a woman, as she had directed. In one of the outhouses there hung the side of a sheep which had been killed the previous day, and to this she led them. Their faces beamed when they saw the plentiful supply; and when she indicated by gestures that they might have it, the man took it down, and coolly laid the heavy burden on the shoulders of the woman, who trudged slowly off with it to join her companions, who had squatted down in a circle on a flat green spot near the water's edge. The man remained with Phyllis, who, still carefully keeping out of sight of the house-windows, led him across the court to the locked storehouse, where such things as tea, sugar, brandy, &c. were kept. With an imperious gesture she desired the man to remain outside, and went in alone to the well-filled store-room. Her all-absorbing thought, as she looked at the shelves where the brandy and rum stood, was, 'How much will it take to stupefy them until Robert and Jack come home?'

She determined to err on the safe side, and lifted out of an opened case half-a-dozen bottles, incased in their straw envelopes. The black-fellow grinned again as she loaded him with the welcome burden, and gave utterance to some guttural and totally unintelligible words, which however seemed to be expressive of satisfaction. As she glanced momentarily into this man's face, Phyllis was

conscious of a more intense loathing than she had known herself to be capable of feeling for anything in human shape.

THE NATIONAL GAME-BAG.

GAME of every description, both furred and feathered, particularly partridges, grouse, and hares, contributes largely nowadays to the national commissariat. Two-thirds of the total grouse-supply of the kingdom—which has been estimated at seven hundred and fifty thousand birds—are derived from Scottish moors; partridges and pheasants are chiefly obtained from the farms and home-preserves of England; whilst ground-game is contributed to the national bag by both countries according to their acreage. The greater portion of the game obtained in the United Kingdom is sent to London, whence it is distributed to all parts of the country; some—grouse in particular—being sent to France and Germany, while not a little finds its way to meat-preserving factories to be 'potted' for our exiled countrymen in India and Australia, who have not the privilege of being able to enjoy a grouse in any other shape.

Besides being forwarded to London, supplies of most kinds of game, particularly grouse, are sent from the moors direct to dealers in provincial towns; but as a rule, the supply centres in the great metropolis; and it frequently occurs that hampers of birds, more especially of grouse and black-cock, consigned to dealers in large provincial towns, are at once re-addressed and forwarded to London, with the certainty that in Lendenhall or Newgate markets the best prices will be obtained. The wholesale dealers there are numerous and wonderfully smart in the conduct of their business, doing their best to secure good profits out of a material which is notoriously perishable. In this they are now largely aided by the use of the telegraph, by means of which they can at once feel the pulse of distant customers, or become apprised of the extent of whatever consignments may be on the road.

The magnitude and value of the national bag of game can of course only be approximately estimated, but reliable figures exist from which a tolerably correct return can be made up. It has been ascertained, for instance, by persons in the trade that more than three hundred thousand grouse are annually consumed in London. In the other large cities and towns of England, an equal number are disposed of; while throughout Scotland and in various of the smaller towns and villages, it is certain that one hundred thousand of these birds annually find their way into the hands of the cook. This seems a vast number; but as the sporting rental of Scotland is assessed at something like a quarter of a million sterling, and as large supplies of grouse are likewise obtained from the extensive moors of Lancashire, Yorkshire, Derbyshire, and Cumberland, the number is doubtless pretty correct; although it varies considerably as the season is a good or a bad one. Thus, from the absence of rain and the healthy appearance of the young birds, it was predicted some months ago that sport of all kinds would this year (1878) be abundant; and it was thought that grouse in particular would be more plentiful

than usual; a prediction which has been borne out by the sport experienced on the moors.

The wholesale value of the grouse which are annually contributed to the national game-bag has been calculated on an average at the rate of one shilling and twopence per bird, free of all expenses of carriage and commission to wholesale dealers. At that rate Scotland's two-thirds represent a money value of forty-eight thousand eight hundred pounds. To persons who are sometimes charged half a guinea for a brace of grouse, one shilling and twopence for each bird may seem a small average; but it is nevertheless correct, as sometimes during the course of a season, when the wholesale markets become glutted, good birds can be had as cheap as sixpence each, while at other times they command seven shillings per brace. The amount named will not go far to pay a sporting rental of a quarter of a million sterling; but a large portion of that sum, it must be kept in mind, is derived from the lessees of deer-forests and fishings. Some of the Scottish deer-forests are of considerable magnitude, extending over twenty miles in length, and ranging in breadth from nine to thirteen miles. The rents paid for individual tracts of ground are in some instances very high—as high as seven thousand pounds per annum in one instance; of four thousand pounds in another instance; whilst there are at least twenty shootings let at sums ranging from one to three thousand pounds. It will convey some idea of the magnitude of the ground taken up by the moors and forests of Scotland, when it is explained that the average sum which is derived from them in the form of rental amounts to but one shilling and twopence per acre. The number of times that one shilling and twopence can be calculated in a quarter of a million of pounds sterling therefore gives the acreage of Scotland devoted to sport; and if we calculate the total value of the game of all kinds, and the fish in the shape of salmon and trout caught by the rod, at not more than eighty thousand pounds per annum, it will be seen that sportsmen pay pretty dearly for their amusement.

It has been calculated that every stag which is brought down costs the tenant of the deer-forest fifty pounds, and that every brace of grouse which is shot costs the sportsman a sovereign!

Before taking leave of the grouse-moors, we may be perhaps allowed to observe that an opinion has been gaining ground of late years that the birds are deteriorating; which is in part the cause of the disease that every few years becomes epidemic on the moors. An ingenious proposition has more than once been ventilated for improving the breed of grouse by an infusion of new blood. This plan of improvement was tried a few years ago under the auspices of a Scottish nobleman, who having moors in two different parts of the country, was able to cross the grouse on one of his moors with birds from another shooting, with perfect success. The grouse is a peculiar bird, and will only breed and thrive upon the kind of ground which has become its home. Several attempts have been made to transplant it, but none of them has proved successful. If as many as five hundred thousand birds are annually shot upon the Scottish moors, it will naturally be supposed that a large supply of parent grouse is necessary to keep up the breeding-stock. As a matter of fact,

grouse generally lay from seven to twelve eggs, and the average number of birds in a covey may be set down at nine; but successful hatching is dependent on several circumstances. In some seasons the eggs in the nests are destroyed by a more than usual rainfall; whilst in other years the tender birds are killed by the severe frosts which in the north of Scotland are incidental to the breeding-season. Some economists maintain that a breeding-stock must be left on a moor equal to twenty-five per cent. of the number killed; others hold that at least forty birds must be left for every hundred taken away.

The grouse, like other wild animals, recede before the civilising efforts of man; and they are likely, as the reclamation of waste lands goes on, to become less plentiful. It is thought that within the next ten years a very large surface of ground now devoted to deer and grouse may be brought into cultivation, and be ultimately sown with corn or other crops; so that instead of being worth only fourteenpence per acre, it will some day become thirty-fold more valuable. The way in which shooting-ground has risen in value during the last quarter of a century is remarkable. Twenty-five or thirty years ago, shootings were not the source of revenue they have since become. Men who possess a stretch of heather, upon which their father fed a scanty stock of sheep, now find themselves drawing from it a handsome income of from six to twelve hundred pounds a year, arising from the fact of its being populated with a few thousand birds which it has become the fashion of the age for certain men to pay large sums of money for the privilege of shooting. To rent a far-away stretch of heather on a Highland hillside requires a much larger expenditure than is generally supposed—an expenditure which we know too is very readily incurred, even by men who have earned a reputation for great shrewdness, and who in any other matter would frown ready disapprobation if asked to sell for about twentypence an article which had cost them half as many shillings.

In addition to grouse, the game-bird *par excellence*, we have the black-cock and the gray hen, the capercaillie, the ptarmigan, and the partridge, likewise the pheasant, all of which contribute largely to the national commissariat. There is no separate computation of rental for the grounds on which our partridges and pheasants are bred; but these birds in their season are wonderfully abundant. There are perhaps five times as many partridges in England as there are grouse in Scotland; and pheasants are being bred in greater numbers every year. The national game-bag is supplied with its partridges chiefly from English counties, of which Norfolk, Lincoln, and Suffolk contribute a large percentage; whilst considerable supplies come also from France and Belgium. It may be accepted as a fact not lightly stated, that quite a million of partridges are annually sold in London, and as many more in the country, including the larger provincial towns.

As has been stated, there is no separate rental for game-ground in England, nor in Scotland either for such game as partridges and pheasants; but if the wholesale price of partridges be set down at the round average of one shilling each bird, a tolerable idea of the value of that contribution to our game commissariat will be obtained. Partridge-shooting, if not so picturesque as grouse-

shooting, is undoubtedly both pleasant and profitable, and stubbles being more accessible than heather, a larger number of persons are enabled to enjoy the sport. Pheasant-shooting again, is still tamer work, as the pheasant, beautiful though it be, is little removed from being what we may call a barn-door fowl. It is bred in enormous quantities, common hens being frequently employed for the purpose of hatching the eggs; and the bird being comparatively tame, is easily killed. During what may be called the battue-season, in December and January, pheasants, partridges, and hares reach London daily from all quarters in tens of thousands. About Christmas, notwithstanding the enormous demand, a glut of these commodities is sometimes experienced, upon which occasional birds are sold for 'just what they will bring,' a partridge for sixpence, a pheasant for a shilling! All classes for a day or two may at such times enjoy game. The capercaillie is again to be found in the pine-woods of the north of Scotland in considerable numbers, and an occasional bird finds its way to market, but the 'Cock of the woods' has not at present any commercial value. Some other birds, as black-cock, ptarmigan, and snipe, aid in some degree the national commissariat; but in grouse, partridges, and pheasants we find the birds that bulk largest in the national game-bag, and which are of most consequence to those who breed and feed them.

A considerable weight of venison is every year brought to market; but the deer is more an animal of sport than of economic importance. There is one gentleman entered on the sporting rent-roll of Scotland as tenant of a deer-forest the rental of which is seven thousand pounds per annum, and the thorough enjoyment of which will cost, at least for the three months during which it is occupied, an additional sum of say fifteen hundred pounds; while all that the gentleman can have in return, is the privilege of shooting some hundred and forty stags and a few hundred brace of grouse.

Whilst the deer need not be calculated upon as being of any great account in the national commissariat, that well-known contributor to the soup-pot, the hare, fills up all the odd corners of the British game-bag. There are few persons who are aware of the excellent food-value of this animal or of the fact that more than a million hares pass through Leadenhall and Newgate markets during the season in which they can be legally captured; and as the wholesale value of each animal may be calculated at about two shillings, the amount of money derived from these ground-game, which are on sale in every large and small town in the empire, must be very considerable.

In considering the economic value of game, it may be safely affirmed that a brace of partridges, which can often enough be purchased for half-a-crown, will yield, as the cook would say, as much 'outcome' as a fowl; and a partridge is highly susceptible of the arts of the cook. The average weight of a pheasant prepared for the spit is about two pounds and a quarter. A hare bought from a retail poulterer at three-and-sixpence is, if economically cooked, relatively cheaper than a fowl purchased at the same money, seeing that it carries upon its bones a greater weight of meat than a capon of the same price. A well-fed hare

of average size will weigh when prepared for cooking, about four and a half pounds. As man cannot live on beef alone, nor even on mutton, the various kinds of winged and furred animals known as game bring to his table a welcome variety, whilst to invalids that kind of meat is invaluable.

In estimating the value of the national game-bag, there is something droll in connection with the price at which it is filled. It has been already noted that the cost of every brace of grouse to the sportsman who kills them is reputed to be about a pound; and yet even in the earlier days of the season, about the 20th of August, the public may purchase grouse from the poulterers at from four shillings to half-a-guinea a brace. How curious it would sound if we were told that the table-spoons which we use cost ten shillings each to manufacture, but that a number of eccentric manufacturers were determined that the public should obtain them at half-a-crown each! The cases are sufficiently upon a level to be worth noting. 'Why a man should become lessee of a vast moor, and work like a slave at grouse-shooting for the good of the game-dealer, is one of those things which are too mysterious for solution,' said the late Lord Palmerston; and there are many who are equally puzzled with the problem. The solution however, is easy, and lies in the fact that no genuine sportsman takes a shooting with a view to making a profit or even squaring the expense. As a set-off against the outlay involved, he has health-giving exhilarating excitement in the shape of *sport*. He has the anticipation, the realisation, and the retrospect of glorious tramps through the heather or across the stubble.

There is no doubt that the national game-bag is a splendid contributor to the national commissariat, and that those who rent the wide wastes of heather which are found in Scotland and elsewhere are public benefactors, inasmuch as they are the means of conferring benefits on a number of people who would not otherwise obtain them. The gold of the Sassenach is a welcome sight in the Highlands of Scotland, both to the owner of the moors and to those who watch them; whilst the sale of all kinds of game has given rise to an industry which annually sends large sums of money into a hundred useful channels.

UNCLE BENJAMIN'S STORY.

'WELL, my dears, if I must tell you a story, I will tell you what once happened when I was returning from India, now many years ago. With the earlier events of the story I was personally connected, and the rest was afterwards told me by one of the chief actors in it.' So spake our dear old Uncle Benjamin, when on a visit to us last Christmas; and we his nephews and nieces, who had been teasing him to tell us some of his adventures, delightedly composed ourselves to listen.

'I might,' he continued, 'call it a "tale of circumstantial evidence;" but for reasons which you will no doubt afterwards perceive, I prefer to style it "Cast Down, but not Destroyed."

'The homeward-bound troop-ship *Stirling Castle*, Captain Bowlby, was becalmed in the tropics. For three days there had hardly been a breath of wind, and the sea lay around her smooth as glass. But although all was so calm and peaceful outside, yet on board the ship a painful and intense excitement prevailed. General Page, one of the chief-cabin passengers, had been robbed and nearly killed the night before; and the person accused of the crime was Walter Stevenson, a young lieutenant, and a general favourite of all on board. But to explain, I must go back a little. The *Stirling Castle* belonged to the old East India Company, and General Page having retired from the service, was returning to Old England. He was accompanied by his daughter Rose, a young lady about twenty-two years of age, who without being exactly beautiful, possessed a vivacity and charm of manner which captivated all who approached her.

'There were several other officers on board; but only two enter into the story; the first being Colonel Morton, a very old friend of the General's; and the other, the Lieutenant Stevenson above mentioned. Colonel Morton and the General had known each other in youth, their respective families owning neighbouring estates; they had gone out to India together, and now were returning home in company. And still another tie bound the two old friends together. Colonel Morton had a son, and they had agreed that this son should marry the General's daughter, partly because of their long-standing friendship, and partly because the two estates united would make a very fine property. Nay, the General even went so far as to make his will, leaving all his property to Rose it is true, but appointing Colonel Morton sole trustee, and authorising him to use the influence the position gave him to bring about a match between the young people.

'Now, although all this was known to Rose, yet it affected her very little; she was a true woman, and would only follow the dictates of her own heart; and who shall govern the caprices of the god of love? Soon after leaving Calcutta, it was noticed that Lieutenant Stevenson was often seen in her company. Whether it was his handsome person, his bold frank bearing, or his general intelligence and affability that first attracted her, I know not, but certain it is their friendship quickly ripened into mutual love. Ere the Cape was reached they had confessed to each other, and the father was made acquainted with their feelings and wishes. But alas! did the course of true love ever run smooth? As before mentioned, the General had his own idea with regard to Rose, and so he sternly refused his sanction to her engagement with Stevenson.

'I now come to the dreadful circumstances mentioned in the opening of my story. There had been a good deal of merriment in the large saloon the night before; but because of his anomalous position with regard to Rose, Stevenson took very little part in it, and retired early. The General too,

not feeling very well, had passed into his cabin somewhat before his usual time; and soon after eleven o'clock entire silence reigned throughout the whole of the after-cabins. So things remained until about five o'clock in the morning, when all were aroused by loud cries for help, proceeding from the General's room. Hurriedly throwing on a few clothes, several of the passengers hastened to the cabin indicated; and what a sight met their horrified eyes! Supported in the arms of Lieutenant Stevenson, lay the General, his head bathed in blood. His closed eyes and pallid lips seemed to betoken death, except that his laboured breathing and deep groans shewed that he still lived. In another part of the cabin lay the body of the General's servant, and examination shewed that he was quite dead. Being very old, he had been unable to withstand the heavy blow dealt him. The ship's doctor, Captain Bowlby, Colonel Morton, and many others were now collected in the cabin; and after the doctor had taken the wounded man in hand, the question was anxiously asked: How did it occur? As Stevenson was the one who had given the alarm, all looked to him for an explanation; but what he had to tell was summed up in a very few words. He said he had been restless all the night, and had got up early, to see the beauties of a tropical sunrise; that passing the General's door, he heard groans; that he had knocked, to see if he could be of any service; but receiving no reply, he had entered, and found things in the state they saw them.

There were many who shook their heads at this tale, as it was well known the General had not an enemy in the ship, unless it might be the lieutenant himself; and most knew that the two were not on very good terms. Some one suggested suicide; but the doctor shewed that the wound on the head had been caused by a blunt instrument, and was in such a position that it could not have been self-inflicted. And now suspicion grew stronger that Stevenson knew more than he had told. Men asked themselves: "Who would be the gainer by the old man's death?" Stevenson of course; as the only obstacle to his marriage with Rose would then be removed, especially as diligent search failed to discover the box asserted by Colonel Morton to contain the will. So things remained for several days.

Stevenson could not but notice the half-averted glances of his fellow-passengers, yet he treated the idea of being really suspected as preposterous. Rose was for the most part closely engaged at the bedside of her father, who still hovered between life and death. He was for a great portion of the time quite unconscious; still there were intervals when he seemed to be aware of all that was passing. This being the case, it was arranged that he should be asked, in the presence of the principal passengers, to name his assailant. At the time appointed by the doctor as being a likely one to find the General fit to receive them, the cabin was filled by Captain Bowlby, Colonel Morton, and many others, among them being Lieutenant Stevenson. It was a scene, solemn as striking, in that dimly lighted cabin. The patient with his bandaged head, and his face scarcely less pale than the sheet on which he lay; the by-standers, with anxiety and curiosity strangely mingled in their faces, made up a picture not easily forgotten. The time seemed propitious, as the General recognised

Rose and several others around him; but now a difficulty occurred: the wound in the throat was in such a state that the doctor would not allow him to speak. It was therefore arranged that paper and pen should be given him, and while one held him up, he should be simply asked to write the name of his assailant. "And we must be quick, gentlemen," added the doctor, "or the excitement of the scene may overcome him before you obtain what you want." Thus urged, and all being ready, Captain Bowlby solemnly asked the patient if he understood what was required of him. A momentary brightening of the eye was answer sufficient, and none doubted but that the author of the crime would soon be exposed. But alas! the will was stronger than the power; for when the General had painfully traced a few letters, the pen fell from his hand, his eyelids closed, and he passed into a state of complete unconsciousness.

And what were the letters written? The culprit's fate hangs upon them. Here they are, S T E. What a pity there are only three; and yet—when the Captain read out in a firm clear voice S T E, all eyes involuntarily turned on Stevenson, as though there could be no doubt that he was the man, and that these three letters were as good as a whole name. And so it proved; for on reference to the ship's books and passenger list, no other name was found (either Christian or surname) beginning with Ste. Nor was this all; for just at this moment a man entered the cabin bringing the missing box, which he stated had been found hidden behind Stevenson's bed. Examination shewed that the lock was broken and the will missing. So convinced was Captain Bowlby by this evidence, that he exclaimed in stern tones: "Lieutenant Stevenson, retire to your cabin, and consider yourself under arrest for the remainder of the voyage." It was done, and the once gay and still noble-looking Walter Stevenson was led away a suspected thief and murderer.

But did every one believe him guilty? Not so. Need I say that the exception was the one whose opinion he prized more than all the rest—namely his beloved Rose. Assured of her belief in his innocence, and strong in his own consciousness, it mattered little to him what others thought; and so, when he passed from the cabin, his eye quailed not, nor did his tall form lose one inch of its height.

I must now in very few words pass over more than a month. The good ship had steadily pursued her way, and was rapidly approaching the end of the voyage. No event of importance had occurred since the scene depicted above. The old General, contrary to all expectation, gradually became stronger; but alas! as his bodily health improved so did it become the more manifest that his mind was gone. The blow on the head had been too much for him; and though his life was spared, and his strength, comparatively speaking, restored, yet it was only to be an imbecile; simple and harmless it is true, but none the less an imbecile. Stevenson, confined to his cabin, had—as much as prudence and her duties to her father allowed—been cheered by visits from the noble girl. These visits were necessarily few and short, but still they were sufficient to assure him of her undying love and confidence. She could not but confess that appearances were very much against him, and that a dark cloud overshadowed him;

yet she could not for a moment believe that he, whom she thought the very embodiment of all that was good, could be guilty of so foul a crime. What tongue can tell the pleasure these sweet assurances gave to Stevenson! Supported by them and his own inner consciousness, he could defy the rest. The evidences against him might be clear, and his chances of refuting them apparently very small, yet his trust in God was never shaken; he knew there must be another explanation of the evidence, and he believed in due time the explanation would appear.

'Such was the position of affairs when the *Stirling Castle* arrived in the Thames. Stevenson was taken before the magistrates; and upon the evidence already narrated, was formally committed for trial, some of the principal passengers being bound over to appear when called upon. I will not attempt to describe the parting between the lovers; it was hard to bear; hard for Rose, although she was going to a comfortable home, surrounded by friends; but how doubly hard for Stevenson, who was not only parted from his heart's idol, but was going to a felon's cell with a stigma on his name. What wonder that he was overcome, that his courage failed him, that he fairly broke down. But over this I draw a veil; manhood's tears are terrible to see, and can only flow from a heart's agony.

'Rose too was fearfully prostrated and almost heart-broken; but like a brave little woman as she was, she collected herself, and knowing her lover's safety depended on her exertions, she set herself firmly about the task. Now it happened that Rose had a god-father, with whom she had been a great favourite before she went to India. This was Dr Bailey, a man of considerable repute in his profession. As a girl, Rose had always been accustomed to take her little joys and griefs to him, sure of a welcome. No wonder then that in this the sorest strait of her life, she should fly to her most valued friend. She did so; and there sitting at his feet, as in old and happy times, she told him all—told of Stevenson's nobleness and worth, of his love for her, and—blushing the while—of her love for him. Then she spoke of the murder of the old servant, and her voice trembled as she told of the horror of that night; then she passed on to speak of the suspicions against Stevenson; not one fact did she conceal; but her voice was no longer low and trembling, but firm and indignant that any should so judge him. But how quailed her heart when she looked up and saw the grave and doubtful expression on the good doctor's face; and when he repeated her words and reminded her of the will, of Stevenson's presence in the cabin, of the empty box found in his room, and above all, of the writing by the General, all pointing so conclusively to Stevenson, she saw at once that he also believed her lover guilty. For a moment her own heart and her faith almost failed her, and she too felt inclined to yield to the weight of evidence. But shaking off the feeling with a shudder, as though some noxious reptile had touched her, she poured out such a passionate flood of eloquence in defence of her lover, that the doctor, catching her enthusiasm, was compelled to yield to her powerful conviction. Seeing this, Rose fell on his breast, and in a passionate burst of tears, kissed him and called him her good kind friend.

'When they were a little calmer the doctor said: "Although *we* may believe him innocent, yet our belief will not save him unless we can bring forth proof. I will come round and see my old friend the General."

"Alas!" said Rose, "that would be useless. He remembers nothing, and even if he did, his evidence is strong against Stevenson. But come by all means."

"I will. In the dim light of the cabin he may have been mistaken in his man."

'Rose shook her head, and yet even this tiny ray of hope sent a thrill through her heart. "My father may have been mistaken," she whispered to herself; but again her spirits sunk when she remembered his condition.

'The next morning Dr Bailey, true to his word, called upon Rose, and brought with him a Dr Smyth, a man who had made all the phases of insanity his special study. After a time they were shewn into the General's room, and found him sitting up, cheerfully playing with a skein of silk. A very few minutes served to convince them that he was quite an imbecile, and had no rational idea of what was passing around him. But when Dr Smyth was told that this resulted from a blow on the head, he evinced more interest in the matter, and asked to be allowed to examine the scar. This he did, and the examination was long and careful. At length, calling Dr Bailey to one side, a whispered conversation took place between them.

'All this time Rose was very nervous and anxious for the result. At last her god-father, turning to her, said: "My good friend here thinks it just possible that your father's reason may be restored. The fact is the blow on the head has broken the skull, and owing to not very skilful treatment when the wound was healing, a small piece of bone is left pressing on the brain. If this were removed, it is probable reason would be restored. Of course," he continued, "your father will have to undergo an operation; but this is not necessarily dangerous. I will send you some medicine, and you must nurse him very carefully for the next few days; and then, if we think him strong enough, it shall be done."

'Rose heard all this, but it can scarcely be said that she understood it, so far beyond her fondest hopes did it all appear; so in a sort of half-dreamy manner she bade them "Good-morning." When, however, she got to her own room, and thought it over, and its full meaning dawned upon her, she fell on her knees and poured out her heart to God in thankfulness for such a possibility. Her dear father to be restored to her! What a joyous thought; and moreover there lurked behind it another thought, if possible still *more* joyous, that her father might be able to say something to save that other dear one languishing in a felon's cell. For the time she was happy; how happy only those can tell who have been suddenly raised from the depths of despair to the heights of hope.

'For the next few days she redoubled her attentions to her father, and surely no invalid was half so well cared for as he, for did not her whole future happiness depend on his restoration? Under such kind care and good Dr Bailey's attention, he rapidly gained strength; but the days flew all too quickly, and it now wanted only a little more than a week to the trial. This was fixed for a Monday; and on the Monday previous

the doctors thought the attempt might be made. It was done; and the patient bore it much better than was expected; but the result could not be known all at once, as he was of course greatly prostrated. During the whole of Tuesday and Wednesday he was in a very critical state; but on Thursday the danger was considered past, and on that evening, as Rose was sitting at his bedside, she heard his voice calling feebly: "Rose, Rose!" The tone was so natural, that she was at once convinced that he knew her. Repressing with great effort the violent desire she felt to throw her arms round his neck, she answered: "Here I am, papa."

"How quiet the ship is!" he murmured. "I cannot feel her roll at all. I wish the breeze would come, so that we might get home."

Rose hardly knew what to make of this or what to answer; at first she thought his mind was still affected, but the clear intelligent look of his eye convinced her that he was sane. As gently as possible she soothed him, and he soon fell off to sleep again. When Dr Bailey, coming in soon after, was told of the success of the operation, he was much pleased; but he enjoined the greatest quietude, especially that all topics should be avoided likely to excite the patient's mind.

"From this time the General improved very rapidly, so much so as to be able to take a little walk in the garden on Sunday. Following the instructions of the doctor, Rose conversed only of commonplace and present matters, although of course to some extent the past must have been alluded to, in explanation of her father's change of position, that is from shipboard to London. At the same time she was burning to question him as to what he remembered of that terrible night.

"On Monday morning when she went into his bedroom, he said: "My dear child, you look very ill and careworn;" and then receiving no answer, he continued: "I have been thinking about that Lieutenant Stevenson; what has become of him?" This was more than Rose could bear, so falling on her knees at his bedside, she—with many a sob and tear—told him all.

"As the results of this conversation will appear further on, I will not detain you with it now, only to say that it sent Rose to her room in an ecstasy of joy, causing her to throw herself on her knees, and in the fullness of her heart, thank God for all his mercies.

"I pass on now to the trial of the prisoner. It happened that this was the first case on the list, so it was still early when the trial commenced. I should like to describe to you the scene in court, did time permit, but I must ask you to imagine it. Captain Bowlby proved the finding of Stevenson in the General's cabin, and described the state in which it appeared. Colonel Morton proved the fact of the will having been made and deposited in the box, and told how it was against Stevenson's interests, which fact was known to Rose, and therefore presumably to Stevenson also. Others proved the finding of the box, hidden away behind the prisoner's bed; and last of all the paper written by the General was brought forward, containing the first three letters of Stevenson's name. The counsel for the defence did all that could be done, but was quite unable to dispute the facts or break down the evidence. Then came the judge's summing up. He pointed

out that although the evidence was clear, yet it was in a measure what is termed circumstantial; on the other hand, it must necessarily be so, as many murders were committed with no actual eye-witness. Much more he said fairly and pointedly, and then the jury retired. You might have heard a pin drop when they returned, and although the foreman pronounced the word "Guilty" in a low tone, it seemed to sound and re-echo through the whole court.

"Prisoner at the bar," said the judge in a solemn voice, "a jury of your fellow-countrymen have found you guilty of a dreadful crime, and I am bound to say that I agree with the verdict. I am quite willing to believe that you did it under a sudden impulse, hardly knowing what you did; nay, I may believe that in the first instance your only object was to get possession of the will; but finding yourself discovered either by the servant or the General, you committed the greater crime to conceal the less. It therefore only remains to me," he continued, assuming the black cap, while a visible shudder trembled through the room, "to pass sentence upon you, which is"—

"But just at that moment there was a disturbance near the door, and a female voice was heard imploring: "For mercy's sake, let us pass. It is General Page. The prisoner is innocent!" All eyes turned to the spot; and Rose, in a state of great excitement, was seen leading her father forward.

"The counsel for the defence immediately obtained permission to place the General in the witness-box, where, on account of his great feebleness, he was accommodated with a chair. After the usual preliminaries, the question was asked: "Do you know the prisoner at the bar?"

"Yes; it is Lieutenant Stevenson."

"Did he enter your cabin the night your servant was murdered?"

"No; not that I am aware of."

"But you wrote a portion of his name on a piece of paper. See; here it is."

"Yes; but it appears I did not finish it. Give it me, and I will do so now." Handing back the paper, he continued: "There; that is the man who attacked me."

"The mystery was all explained now; the completed word was—STEWART; and all this misery had been caused by the want of the four little letters—ward. The steward then was actually the man. No one had thought of him, and yet what more easy! He was always in and out of the cabins, and would be sure to notice the box; and evidently thinking it contained valuables, had stolen it. Having done so; and finding suspicion already fallen upon Stevenson, nothing was more easy than to hide the empty box where it was found. All this was ascertained to be substantially correct; for the man was arrested, and soon after confessed his dreadful crimes.

"I have nothing more to add, except that Stevenson was discharged without a stain on his name, and that the old General, yielding to the solicitations of his daughter, and convinced of Stevenson's worth, consented to their engagement. In due time they were married, and as the story-books say, "were happy ever after." And both will ever remember with thankful hearts how, although "cast down, they were not destroyed."

'Thanks, dear uncle! Good-night;' and kissing him, we retired to dream over the troubles of Rose and Stevenson, and also to rejoice that after all they were happy at last.

LIFE IN AN INDIAN TEA DISTRICT.

THE last few years have seen a wide extension of tea-planting in India. In Assam, Cachar, and Sylhet thousands of acres of jungle-land have been gradually brought under cultivation. The same has been done near Darjiling—where the 'Terai,' or belt of forest beneath the lower slopes of the Himalaya, is well suited for the growth of tea—in the Kangra Valley, and in parts of Chota-Nagpore. In spite of the present depression in the tea-trade, gardens are still being opened; every year new land is cleared and planted; while there seems to be no falling off in the number of men who turn their faces eastward, and seek their fortunes in tea in these days of overcrowded professions at home.

A planter's life is often too brightly painted. Visions of boundless liberty and abundant sport, or dreams of an easy road to wealth and comfort, attract men of different characters and habits to the tea-gardens, generally to find their cherished hopes doomed to disappointment. The life is really a hard one, what is life to the plant being too frequently death to the grower. As a damp hot climate suits the tea-plant best, all the districts are more or less unhealthy; and the mortality among Europeans in tea-growing provinces compares unfavourably with that in other parts of India. Houses too are often of the *kutchra* description—mere erections of mats and bamboos tied together with rattans, and affording poor protection against damp. In outlying gardens at a distance from any station or large bazaar, good food is procured with difficulty. Muddy fish, and poverty-stricken fowls and ducks and eggs can indeed be obtained; but are very different from the British article. So obvious is this to Anglo-Indians, that they seldom or never call these delicacies by their English title. It is *murghi* for instance, and not 'fowl,' to the initiated. There is an anecdote of a newly arrived planter who had not yet entered into this distinction of meats. He was a Scotchman of the working-class, and was at breakfast with his employer. Beef and *murghi* were on the table, and on the stranger being asked if he would take some of the latter, he declined to do so, for the odd reason that he 'wasna used to high livin'.

The pay of a young assistant on a tea-garden is at first about a hundred rupees (ten pounds) a month with a free unfurnished house, pony allowance, and one or two inferior servants. In two or three years, if he is steady and fortunate, he may become manager of a garden, with a salary of two hundred or two hundred and fifty rupees a month. After longer experience and success in raising tea, his pay may advance to four hundred rupees or more; but part of this

will depend on the out-put of tea from the garden, and on the prices realised at sales, on which managers are allowed commission. Meanwhile, his expenses are considerable. Few men can keep their health in the tropics without certain luxuries and comforts unnecessary in England; and these in a tea district are sold at exorbitant prices. One or more ponies and their attendants have to be kept besides those allowed by the garden; upper house-servants receive high wages for India; and to swell his expenses, the planter has to take his part in the hospitalities and amusements of the district.

The day's work beginning at sunrise, coolies are mustered and sent in gangs to their tasks; some to pluck the leaf or weed and prune the bushes; others to roll and dry the leaf in manufacturing houses; or to sort and pack the prepared tea. Gangs will be busy elsewhere on the roads or drains in various parts of the estate, and their work must be superintended at intervals on horseback. A planter is in the saddle from sunrise till ten or eleven o'clock A.M., returns from outdoor work to look in at the tea-houses, has his breakfast, spends an hour or two afterwards in the stifling atmosphere of the drying-sheds, and then goes out again over the garden till the coolies are turned in at five; when a formidable array of reports, disputes to settle, records of the day's work to make up, and arrangements for to-morrow, await him. At seven or eight o'clock he will dine, and the mosquitoes or sand-flies will soon drive him into his curtains afterwards.

Society is, as may be supposed, of a mixed character. In most districts there is a government station, with two or three resident civilians, perhaps a native regiment with half-a-dozen English officers, a doctor, and possibly a clergyman, some of whom may have their wives with them. A lady may now and then be met with on the gardens also. Distances are so great and roads so bad, that men seldom meet in any numbers or see much of any but their nearest neighbours, unless there is an annual gathering for pony-racing and athletic sports in the cool season. Once or twice a week a few planters come together to play polo, natives joining in the game. A dinner-party often finishes the evening's amusement, or a moonlight ride home to quarters.

Sportsmen are usually disappointed in tea districts. Planters have neither time nor means at hand to follow large game in the heavy jungles, and wild animals are being driven farther and farther into the forests every year, as new gardens are opened out. A stray tiger sometimes affords a little excitement. After a few cows have been carried off or a belated coolie killed, things are thought serious enough to warrant the formation of a hunting-party. The carcass of the last deceased cow is discovered in the jungle, and the sportsmen establish themselves at night on a *machan* or platform in the nearest trees to wait for the tiger to come and be shot, which he generally declines to

do. Poison is more effective in getting rid of troublesome animals; but there is a slight risk of some low-caste coolies, who will eat anything, making a forbidden feast off the poisoned carcass. Last year, a planter in Cachar was badly mauled by a tiger. It was an old and decrepit female, which had killed two or three natives on the garden, and paid nightly visits to the neighbourhood of the lines and bungalow. Three planters sat up for her in the verandah at night, and as one of them was dozing in his chair, the tigress sprang in upon him, seizing the arm he instinctively raised to protect his face, and tearing open his cheek with her claws. When the first surprise was over, one of his companions shot the animal in the verandah, while she was still upon his friend, and finished her off with the bayonet.

In the earlier days of tea-planting, frontier districts were liable to incursions of the Hill tribes. The Lushais were the chief offenders, and they visited the gardens more than once. Besides love of plunder, one of their national customs led to these expeditions. On the death of a chief, they think it essential to his happiness in the other world that a number of newly-obtained human heads should grace his obsequies, and peaceful coolies on tea-gardens often seemed the most convenient neighbours to supply them. A war-party would then come down from the hills and fall on the lines before daybreak, murdering every man woman and child they met. The bungalow was usually assaulted also, with the same result, if the inmates were taken by surprise or had no adequate means of resistance. There is a tablet in the Cachar church to the memory of a planter named Winchester, who was cut to pieces in one of these raids, and his daughter carried off; to be rescued by a British force afterwards sent against the tribe. A detachment of Lushais which attacked a bungalow about the same time was driven off with loss by two planters and the wife of one of them. The lady loaded the rifles throughout the skirmish, and was as cool and determined as any of the party.

What are the prospects of young men who come out to tea? It is to be feared they are often represented in too attractive colours. A few have certainly in the course of time gained a competence, or have become well off by lucky speculation. But these have been for the most part men who owned private capital, or who, after long experience and success in tea-making, have gained the confidence of firms or agents, so as to be able to borrow large sums for opening new gardens in which they have obtained shares. Instances are few and far between of men growing rich with only their pay to depend upon, and these are fewer now than they used to be. No one should come out to tea-planting without the promise of employment from proprietors or agents at home or in India, and even then he should not expect to become wealthy unless he has money of his own to invest, or more than the usual luck of men abroad. Recommendations or introductions to Calcutta firms, on the strength of which so many leave home, are often of small value, from the number of applicants for employment already on their books. At best, a man has to face the certainty of a hard life, much drudgery in a trying climate, and many anxieties and changes of fortune; while he can

only hope to become master of sufficient wealth to enable him some day to return home in average comfort, after many years of exile and unsettled life.

STRANGE ANIMAL FRIENDSHIPS.

WHY married folk, so ill-mated as to agree only to differ, should be said to lead a cat-and-dog-life, is not very clear, since those household pets, being intelligent, affectionate, cheerful, and sociable creatures, very frequently contrive to live harmoniously enough together. The Aston Hall cat that ate, associated, and slept with a huge blood-hound, only did what innumerable cats have done. Such companionships are too common to be reckoned among strange animal friendships, such as that most singular instance of attachment between two animals of opposite natures and habits, related to Mr Jesse by a person on whose veracity he could depend. The narrator boasted the proprietorship of an alligator which had become so tame that it would follow him up and down stairs; while it was so fond of his cat's society, that when she lay down before the fire the alligator followed suit, made a pillow of puss, and went off to sleep; and when awake the reptile was only happy so long as puss was somewhere near, turning morose and ill-tempered whenever she left it to its own devices.

Many equine celebrities have delighted in feline companions, following in this the example of their notable ancestor, the Godolphin Arab, between whom and a black cat an intimate friendship existed for years, a friendship that came to a touching end; for when that famous steed died, his old companion would not leave the body, and when it had seen it put underground, crawled slowly away to a hay-loft, and refusing to be comforted, pined away and died.

One of Miss Braddon's heroines says: 'It is so nice to see a favourite horse looking over the door of his loose-box, with a big tabby cat sitting on the window-ledge beside him.' The big tabby would probably prefer being on horseback, for puss takes very kindly to the stable, and the horse takes as kindly to puss. A cat belonging to the royal stables at Windsor made herself so agreeable to one of the horses there, that rather than put her to any inconvenience, he would take his night's rest standing. This was held detrimental to his health; and the stable authorities, unable to hit upon any other plan, banished poor pussy to a distant part of the country.

Mr Huntington, of East Bloomfield, America, owns a thoroughbred horse named Narragansett and a white cat. The latter was wont to pay a daily visit to Narragansett's stall to hunt up the mice and then enjoy a quiet nap. Mr Huntington removed to Rochester with his family, leaving the cat behind; but she complained so loudly and so unceasingly that she was sent on to the new abode. Her first object was now to get somebody to interpret her desires. At last her master divined

them, and started off with her to the barn. As soon as they were inside, the cat went to the horse's stall, made herself a bed near his head, and curled herself up contentedly. When Mr Hunting-ton visited the pair next morning, there was puss close to Narragansett's feet, with a family of five beside her. The horse evidently knew all about it, and that it behoved him to take heed how he moved his feet. Puss afterwards would go out, leaving her little ones to the care of her friend, who would, every now and then, look to see how they were getting on. When these inspections took place in the mother's presence, she was not at all uneasy, although she shewed the greatest fear and anxiety if any children or strangers intruded upon her privacy.

A gentleman in Sussex had a cat which shewed the greatest affection for a young blackbird, which was given to her by a stable-boy for food a day or two after she had been deprived of her kittens. She tended it with the greatest care; they became inseparable companions, and no mother could shew a greater fondness for her offspring than she did for the bird.

Lemmers shut up a cat and several mice together in a cage. The mice in time got to be very friendly, and plucked and nibbled at their feline friend. When any of them grew troublesome, she would gently box their ears.—A German magazine tells of a M. Hecart who placed a tame sparrow under the protection of a wild-cat. Another cat attacked the sparrow, which was at the most critical moment rescued by its protector. During the sparrow's subsequent illness its natural foe watched over it with great tenderness.—The same authority gives an instance of a cat trained like a watch-dog to keep guard over a yard containing a hare, and some sparrows blackbirds and partridges.

A pair of carriage horses taken to water at a stone trough, then standing at one end of the Manchester Exchange, were followed by a dog who was in the habit of lying in the stall of one of them. As he gambolled on in front the creature was suddenly attacked by a mastiff far too strong for his power of resistance, and it would have gone hard with him, but for the unlooked-for intervention of his stable companion, which, breaking loose from the man who was leading it, made for the battling dogs, and with one well-delivered kick sent the mastiff into a cooper's cellar, and then quietly returned to the trough and finished his drink. In very sensible fashion too, did Mrs Bland's half-Danish dog Traveller shew his affection for his mistress's pet pony. The latter had been badly hurt, and when well enough to be turned into a field, was visited there by its fair owner and regaled with carrots and other delicacies; Traveller, for his part, never failing to fetch one or two windfall apples from the garden, laying them on the grass before the pony, and hailing its enjoyment of them with the liveliest demonstrations of delight.

That such relations should exist between the horse and the dog seems natural enough. But that a horse should be hail-fellow with a hen appears

too absurd to be true; yet we have Gilbert White's word for it that a horse, lacking more suitable companions, struck up a great friendship with a hen, and displayed immense gratification when she rubbed against his legs and clucked a greeting, whilst he moved about with the greatest caution lest he might trample on his 'little, little friend.'

Colonel Montagu tells of a pointer which after being well beaten for killing a Chinese goose, was further punished by having the murdered bird tied to his neck; a penance that entailed his being constantly attended by the defunct's relict. Whether he satisfied her that he repented the cruel deed, is more than we know; but after a little while the pointer and the goose were on the best of terms, living under the same roof, feeding out of one trough, occupying the same straw bed; and when the dog went on duty in the field, the goose filled the air with her lamentations for his absence.

A New Zealand paper says: 'There is a dog at Taupo and also a young pig, and these two afford a curious example of animal sagacity and confidence in the *bona fides* of each other. These two animals live at the native pah on the opposite side of Tapuaharuru, and the dog discovered some happy hunting-grounds on the other side, and informed the pig. The pig being only two months old, informed the dog that he could not swim across the river, which at that spot debouches from the lake, but that in time he hoped to share the adventures of his canine friend. The dog settled the difficulty. He went into the river, standing up to his neck in water, and crouched down; the pig got on his back, clasping his neck with his forelegs. The dog then swam across, thus carrying his chum over. Regularly every morning the two would in this way go across and forage around Tapuaharuru, returning to the pah at night; and if the dog was ready to go home before the pig, he would wait till his friend came down to be ferried over. The truth of this story is vouched for by several who have watched the movements of the pair for some weeks past.'

When Cowper cautiously introduced Puss—a hare that had never seen a spaniel—to Marquis, a spaniel that had never seen a hare, he discovered no token of fear in the one, no sign of hostility in the other, and the new acquaintances were soon in all respects sociable and friendly; a proof, the poet thought, that there was no natural antipathy between dog and hare. Upon just as good grounds the same might be inferred regarding dog and fox. We have read of a tame fox hunting with a pack of harriers; and Mr Moffat, of Bearsley, Northumberland, owned one that was excessively fond of canine society. In consequence of detection following a raid on the poultry-yard, Master Reynard was chained up in a grass area. Whenever he caught sight of a dog coming his way, he began fanning his tail, and laying back his ears, would strain desperately at the full length of his tether, that he might smell at the mouth of the dog, and use all his arts to induce him to have a romp, even though he had never set eyes on that especial dog before.

In 1822 some white rats were trapped in Colonel Berkeley's stables. Mr Samuel Moss of Cheltenham took a fancy to a youngster, and determined to make a pet of him. He was soon tamed, and

christened Scugg. Then he was formally introduced to a rat-killing terrier, a ceremony so well understood by Flora that she not only refrained from assaulting the new-comer, but actually constituted herself his protectress, mounting guard over Scugg whenever a stranger came into the room, growling, snarling, and shewing her teeth until convinced he had no evil intentions towards her protégé. These two strangely assorted friends lapped from the same saucer, played together in the garden, and when Flora indulged in a snooze on the rug, Scugg ensconced himself snugly between her legs. He would mount the dinner-table and carry off sugar, pastry, or cheese, while Flora waited below to share in the plunder. One day a man brought Mr Moss another white rat while the terrier and Scugg were racing about the room. The stranger was shaken out of the trap, and presently two white rats were scampering across the floor pursued by Flora; the chase did not last long, one of them quickly falling a victim to the terrier's teeth, much to the experimentalist's alarm, as his eyes could not distinguish one rat from the other. Looking around, however, his mind was relieved, for there in his corner was Scugg with Flora standing sentry before him; a position she held until the man and the dead rat were out of the room. When his master took a wife to himself, a new home was found for Scugg; but the poor fellow died within a month of his removal, and it is not improbable that the separation from his canine friend was the primary cause of the rat's untimely decease.

St Pierre pronounced the mutual attachment displayed between a lion at Versailles and a dog to be one of the most touching exhibitions Nature could offer to the speculations of the philosopher. Such exhibitions are by no means rare. Captive lords of the forest and jungle have often admitted dogs to their society and lived on affectionate terms with them. Not long ago, an ailing lioness in the Dublin Zoological Gardens was so tormented by the rats nibbling her toes, that a little terrier was introduced into the cage. His entrance elicited a sulkily growl from the invalid; but seeing the visitor toss a rat in the air and catch it with a killing snap as it came down, she at once came to the sensible conclusion that the dog's acquaintance was worth cultivating. Coaxing the terrier to her side, she folded her paw round him and took him to her breast; and there he rested every night afterwards, ready to pounce upon any rat daring to disturb the slumbers of the lioness.

The last time we visited the lion-house of the Regent's Park Zoological Gardens, we watched with no little amusement the antics of a dog, who was evidently quite at home in a cage occupied by a tiger and tigress. The noble pair of beasts were reclining side by side, the tiger's tail hanging over the side of their couch. The dog, unable to resist the temptation, laid hold of it with his teeth and pulled with a will; and spite of sundry gentle remonstrances on the part of the owner of the tail, persisted until he elicited a very deep growl of disapproval. Then he let go, sprang upon the tiger's back, curled himself up and went off to sleep. Such friendships are, it must be owned, liable to come to a tragic ending, like that recorded by an ancient writer, who tells how a lion, a dog, and a bear lived together for a long time on the most affectionate terms, until the dog accidentally

putting the bear out of temper, had the life put out of his body; whereupon Leo, enraged at losing his favourite, set upon Bruin and made an end of him too.

YE YEARS!

*'Tis but the ghost of a feeling,
'Tis but the ghost of a smile;
Gone is the true light revealing,
This but a shadow the while.*

Thus shall each rose-tinted vision
Fade as the leaves in the Fall,
Leaving it may be derision
Casting a gleam o'er the pall.

Years glide along without number
(Swift as a wind-driven wave),
Hiding away in its slumber
Much we would struggle to save.

Taking the bloom from the roses,
Taking the down from the peach;
Leaving the thorn from the posies,
Leaving the ashes of each.

Bringing the end of our dreaming,
Rounding the sphere of our life;
Tinting with shades of new meaning,
Harshness of pain or of strife.

Waking our souls from delusion,
Chasing the shadows that throng;
Piercing the veil of illusion,
Righting full many a wrong.

Scattering the false that would cluster
Only when fortune is fair;
Shrining with ever more lustre
Love that all danger would dare.

Testing the true from the faithless,
Tearing the mask from deceit;
Leaving but few that are scathless,
Few—but how precious sweet!

Thanks then, each year that unveileth
Tenderness, courage, and truth;
And for the rest—what availeth?
Take them, ye years, with our youth!

H. K. W.

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2d. To insure the return of papers that may prove ineligible, postage-stamps should in every case accompany them.

3d. MANUSCRIPTS should bear the author's full Christian name, surname, and address, legibly written.

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